

XIV. *Account of the different Species of the Birds, called PINGUINS, by Thomas Pen-
nant, Esquire, F. R. S.*

P I N G U I N S.

Read March 17,
1768. **T**HE characters of this genus are, very small wings and those covered with meer shafts. Four toes on each foot, three of which are webbed, the fourth loose and standing forward.

I. The PATAGONIAN PINGUIN.

TAB. V.

- Size.** The length of the stuffed skin, we measured, was four feet three inches; and the bulk of the body seemed superior to that of a swan.
- Bill.** Four inches and a half long; slender, strait, bending only on the end of the upper mandible, black, covered on each side the base with soft short brown feathers; the sides of the lower mandible compressed, the lower part or base orange coloured, the end dusky. No nostrils.
- Tongue.** Half the length of the bill, and singularly armed with strong sharp spikes pointed backwards.

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Plumage.

Plumage. The most remarkable of all the feathered tribe, each feather lying over the other, with the compactness of the scales of fish; their texture is equally extraordinary; the shafts broad and very thin; the vanes unwebbed; the head, throat, and hind-part of the neck, are of a deep brown colour; from each side of the head to the middle of the fore-part of the neck are two lines of bright yellow, broad above, narrow beneath, and uniting half way down; from thence the same colour widens towards the breast, fading away till it is lost in pure white, of which colour is the whole under side of the body, a dusky line dividing it from the colour of the upper part; the whole back is of a very deep cinereous colour, almost dusky; but the end of each feather is marked with a cœrulean spot, those about the junction of the wings larger and paler than the others.

Wings. Are extremely short in respect to the bulk of the bird, hang down, and have rather the appearance of fins, whose office they perform*; their length is only fourteen inches; on the outside they are dusky, and covered with scale-like feathers, or at best with such whose shafts

* De Veert's Voyage, p. 333. Winter's Voyage in Hacluyt's Coll. III. 752.

are so broad and flat as scarce to be distinguished from scales; those on the ridge of the wings consisting entirely of shaft; the larger or quill feathers have some very short webs.

Tail. Consists of thirty brown feathers, or rather thin shafts, resembling split whale-bone, flat on their upper side, concave on the under, and the webs short, unconnected, bristly.

Legs and Feet. } From the knees to the end of the claws six inches, covered with strong pentangular black scales; the fore-toe scarce an inch long, and the others so remarkably short, as to evince the necessity of that strength of the tail, which seems intended as a support to the bird in its erect attitude; in the same manner as that of the wood-pecker is when it clings to the sides of trees; between the toes is a strong semilunar membrane, continued even up part of the claws; the middle claw is near an inch long, and the inner edge very sharp and thin; the interior toe is small, and placed very high.

Skin. Extremely tough and thick, which, with the closeness of the feathers, guards it effectually in the element it is so conversant in.

History. This bird was brought by Capt. MacBride, from the Falkland Isles, off the Straits of Magellan; we believe this

species to have been undescribed ; for the birds that bear the same name are mentioned by every writer, who treat of them as far inferior in size to this ; some compare their bulk to that of a duck ; but none make it larger than a goose ; the colours also of this species are too striking not to have been taken notice of, had it been before discovered.

Captain Mac-Bride was so obliging as to inform us that this was a very scarce species ; though he saw in the same place multitudes of the lesser kind, with which it agreed in its manner of life. Since the natural history of each species is the same, we shall give a general view of the œconomy, &c. from such writers who have treated of them.

It is agreed that they are inhabitants of southern latitudes only, being, as far as is yet known, found only on the coasts of South America, from Port Desiré to the Straits of Magellan ; and, if we remember right, Frezier says, they are found on the western shore, as high as Conception. In Africa they seem to be unknown, except on a small isle near the Cape of Good Hope, which takes its name from them.

They are found in prodigious numbers on land during the breeding season ; for they seldom come ashore but at that
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time ; they form burrows under ground, like rabbits ; and the isles they frequent are perfectly undermined by them, so that it is difficult to walk without falling into their holes, or sinking through the surface up the shoulders. Such rencontres are disagreeable, as these birds bite extremely hard ; and commonly three or four are found to nestle together in the same hole.

Their eggs are said to be rather less than that of a goose ; and that they begin to lay the latter end of September, or beginning of October.

Their attitude on land is quite erect ; and on that account they have been compared by some to pygmies, by others to children with white bibs*.

On land they are excessively awkward, by reason of the situation of their legs, which are placed quite behind : they are very tame, and may be drove like a flock of sheep ; when pressed, they seek for shelter either in their burrows, or the sea, which seems to be their more natural element.

In the water they are remarkably active, and swim with vast strength, assisting by their wings, which serve instead of fins.

Their food in general is fish, not but that they will eat grass like geese ; for Sir

* Narborough's voyage, p. 59.

Richard Hawkins observed, in an isle they frequent off Patagonia, a small valley covered with grass, which the birds never burrowed in, as if they meant to reserve it for pasturage.

They are very fat, but taste very fishy, not unlike our puffins: as they are very full of blood, it is necessary to cut off their heads as soon as they are killed, in order that it may run out; it is also requisite they should be flayed, for without those precautions their flesh is scarce eatable. When salted it becomes a good food, as navigators have often experienced, in particular Richard Hopkins*, who preserved that way sixteen hogheads, which lasted above two months, and served as beef.

These birds and seals seem to have been bestowed in quantity on those desolate shores, as resources in extremity to distressed voyagers.

Name. The proper name of these birds is Penguin (*propter pinguedinem* †), on account of their fatness. It has been corrupted to Penguin; so that some, imagining it to have been a Welsh word signifying a white head, entertained some hopes of tracing the British colony, said to have migrated into America, under the auspices of Madoc Gwineth, son of Owen

* Sir Richard Hawkins, Obs. 72.

† Clus. Exot. 101.

Gwineth, A. D. 1170 *. But as the two species of birds that frequent that coast have black heads, we must resign every hope founded on that hypothesis of retrieving the Cambrian race in the new world.

We give this species the epithet Patagonian, not only because it is found on that coast, but because it as much exceeds in bulk the common kinds, as the natives are said to do the common race of men. I must not quit this subject without making my acknowledgements to Mr. Banks for communicating this curious bird to me, which he now permits to be laid before the Society for their examination.

II. The lesser P I N G U I N.

Anser Magellanicus. Clus. Exot. 101.

Black-footed Penguin. Edw. 94.

Diomedea demersa. Linn. Syst. 214.

Size. Of a goose.

Bill. Strait to the point, where it grows hooked ; the end of the lower mandible abrupt, as if cut off ; both are black, but marked across near the ends with a yellow bar.

Plumage. The crown, hind-part of the head, the cheeks, and chin, are dusky ; from the

* Powel, Hist. Wales, p. 229.

bill over the eyes, and then down to the neck, passes a white line; the back, and outside of the wings, are of the same colour with the head; the breast, belly, and sides, are white, marked with a brown line passing over the upper part of the breast, under the wings, and terminating at the legs.

They vary in colour; some wanting the white line over the eye, and the brown one over the breast.

Wings. Like those of the preceding.

Legs. Black, which agrees with the Magellanic goose of Clusius, and may be the lesser species observed by our late voyagers to the coast of Patagonia.

III. The red-footed P I N G U I N.

The Penguin. Edw. 49.

Le Gourfou Calaractes. Brisson. Av. VI. 102.

Phaeton demersus. Lynn. Syst. 219.

Size. Inferior to the last.

Bill. Thick, arched, and red.

Plumage. Like in texture to that of the former; the head, hind part of the neck, and the back, of dusky purplish hue; breast and belly white.

Wings. Brown, but the tips of the larger feathers white.

Tail. None, in lieu of it a few black bristles.

Legs. Red.

History.

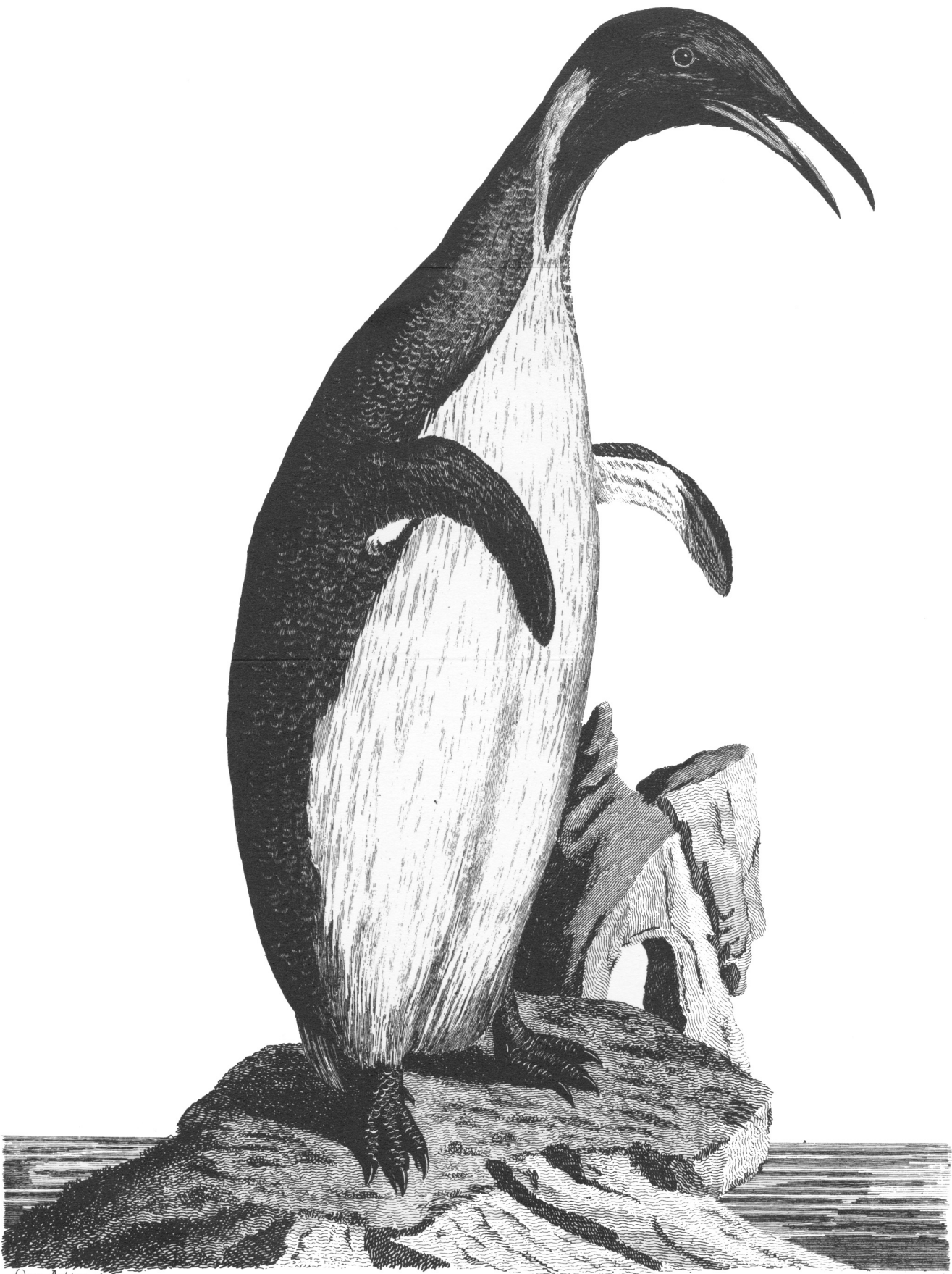
History. This seems to be the African species ; for all that have described the South American kinds attribute to them black legs.

This is found on Penguin isle, near the Cape of Good Hope, of which Sir Thomas Roe, in his Voyage to India, gives this brief relation :

“ On the isle of Penguin is a sort of fowl
 “ of that name, that goes upright ; his
 “ wings without feathers, hanging down
 “ like sleeves faced with white ; they
 “ do not fly, but walk in parcels,
 “ keeping regularly their own quarters *.”

Left the bird known, by the name of Penguin, in the northern parts of Europe and America, should be confounded with these, it may be observed, that it is of another genus ; and it is by the later ornithologists very justly ranked with the Auks.

* In Churchill's Coll. of Voyage, vol. I. p. 767.



Sidney Parkinson pinx.

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A Scale of nineteen Inches.